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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/735,933	12/15/2003	Denis J. Stemmle	F-733	3715
7590	10/04/2005		EXAMINER	
Pitney Bowes Inc. Intellectual Property & Technology Law Department 35 Waterview Drive P.O. Box 3000 Shelton, CT 06484			FRECH, KARL D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2876	
DATE MAILED: 10/04/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/735,933	STEMMLE ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Karl D. Frech	2876	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-57 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1,26,30,31 and 54-57 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 2-24,27-29 and 32-53 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 12/15/03 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: ____.

Art Unit: 2876

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1,30,31,55 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Monico 6,259,369. Monico discloses a RFID device (29) associated with a mail piece (11). When the envelope is sealed the RFID device is active. Thus the state being one of a “never opened” state is anticipated when the RFID device is active and transmitting to an inherent receiver (interrogator). The reception of a transmission from the RFID is considered to be indication of the mail piece status. It is also inherent that a processor for processing the information received by the interrogator is present, i.e. the data center in communication with the interrogator.

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was

not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 26,54,56,57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Monico 6,259,369. Monico discloses that which is seen above. Monico does not disclose the additional interrogator units as in claims 26 and 54. However, Official Notice is taken that multiple interrogators used in the operational environment is old and well known. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to implement the system of Monico with a plurality of interrogators. This would allow for the mail piece to be tracked at a plurality of locations. Monico does not disclose scanning a bar code or manually inputting data. However, both scanning bar codes on documents (mail pieces) and manually inputting data (through a keyboard for example) are old and well known. It would have been obvious to "scan" a bar code on a mail piece in order to populate a database at a specific location regarding the passage of a specific mail piece. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to manually input data regarding a mail piece in order to "update" information regarding the mail piece.

6. Claims 2-24,27-29,32-53 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

7. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: the prior art of record fails to teach or fairly suggest to one of ordinary skill in the art, in conjunction with all the other limitations of the claims, the "state change" indication as in claims 2 and 32, the multiple state changes as in claims 24 and 52, the first and second pieces of information on a mail piece in which the first piece of information indicates a never opened state and the second piece of information indicates a previously opened state as in claim 27.

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Foratinni WO 2004/072875, Pinchen et al US 2003/0121984, and Monico 6,557,758 all disclose RF tracking of mail pieces.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karl D. Frech whose telephone number is (571) 272-2390. The examiner can normally be reached on maxi-flex.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Lee can be reached on (571) 272-2398. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Karl D Frech
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2876
